

1799
*The Comfort and Establishment of Saints GOD's own
Work, and the fervent Wish of Gospel Ministers :*

Represented in an Annual

S E R M O N

Preached to the

S O C I E T Y

Who SUPPORT the

4475. f. 51

1-12

*Wednesday Evening LECTURE, in
Great-Eastcheap.*

DECEMBER 27, 1759.

Published at their Request.

By JOHN STEVENS.

L O N D O N :

Printed for G. KEITH, at the Bible and Crown,
in Grace-Church Street. 1760.

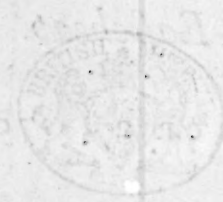
[Price SIX-PENCE]

THE
LIBRARY OF THE
MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY
OF THE
CITY OF NEW YORK

2 E R M O N

100 C 10 T Y

PAID BY THE
CITY OF NEW YORK



PAID BY THE
CITY OF NEW YORK

PAID BY THE
CITY OF NEW YORK

2 THESS. ii. 16, 17.

*Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself,
and God even our Father, which
bath loved us, and bath given us
everlasting Consolation, and good
Hope, through Grace, comfort your
Hearts, and stablish you in every
good Word and Work.*

IT is supposed that the Apostle Paul was the first whom God commissioned to carry the glad Tidings of the Gospel of his dear Son to *Thessalonica*, which was at that time a very populous and flourishing City, and the Metropolis of all *Macedonia*, whither the Apostle was invited in a very extraordinary way to preach the Gospel; *Acts* xvi. 9. Here, as in various other Cities, he dispensed the Gospel of the Grace of God with Freedom, Boldness

and Success; so that many, both *Jews* and *Greeks*, thereby believed through Grace; and the LORD by his Ministrations laid the Foundation of a Gospel Church there. But alas! as soon as the Word of the LORD ran and was glorified in the Conviction of Sinners, and their Conversion to God, the Enmity and Rage of Satan was stirred thereby, so that through the Envy of the unbelieving *Jews*, a Persecution was raised against him and *Silas* his Companion; *Acts* xvii. 5. by which means they were forced to depart. And in order to encourage and strengthen them in their Sufferings for CHRIST and his Gospel, and to animate and exhort them to stand fast in the LORD, and abide by his Truths and Ordinances, and to live holily and godly in this present evil World, he wrote the former Epistle to them, which is supposed to be the first of all the Epistles he wrote; and the second Epistle, it is probable, was wrote not many Months after the former; the principal Designs of which are, first, to
satisfy

satisfy them of his continued Affection for them; and, secondly, to rectify a Mistake which they had run into, from what he had said about CHRIST's second coming, and the End of the World, in his first Epistle, chap. iv. verse 15. Thirdly, To excite them to a holy and circumspect Walking, and discharge of all relative Duties, as also the regular Observation of Church Government: And all those Directions (as well as all the Requests and Thanksgivings offered to GOD on their account through the Epistle) are in the Names of *Paul* and *Sylvanus*, that is, *Silas*; and *Timotheus*, or *Timothy*; in whose Names he begins both those Epistles, because those Brethren were well known to the Saints at *Thessalonica*; as also to shew their joint Affections for them; and perhaps, above all, because he desired to do them Honour, though inferior Ministers of the Word of GOD. He begins the Chapter where our Text is, with an earnest Request, which has in it the Nature
of

of a most solemn Charge, that they might not be shaken or unsettled in Mind; *And now we beseech you, Brethren, by the coming of our Lord JESUS CHRIST, and by our gathering together unto him, that ye be not soon shaken in Mind,* verses 1, 2. And then he warns them of the Appearance of the *Man of Sin, the Son of Perdition,* verses 3, 4. by whom some understand *Simon Magus*, who on account of the pernicious Principles and damnable Heresies which he taught, may perhaps be in part designed; but the full Description of this Man of Sin, this Son of Perdition, which we have in the Context, suits with none so well as the Bishop of *Rome*, including the whole Hierarchy of Priests, Monks, Friars, Jesuits, &c. which may be designed by the Man of Sin: or sometimes a Succession of Priests is designed, and that whole Order intended by the High Priest, *Heb. ix. 7.* here called *the Man of Sin*, because exceeding sinful, and abominable in themselves; and because all kind of Sin is encouraged
in

in others, by their Indulgences, Pardons, Licences, &c.

The Apostle then sets forth the dreadful Effects of his Power and Influence on the Souls of some Men, down to the Close of verse the 12th; where he begins to adore, and excites them to adore also the Riches and Sovereignty of that Grace which had distinguished them; *But we are bound to give thanks always to GOD for you, Brethren, beloved of the LORD, because GOD hath from the Beginning chosen you to Salvation through Sanctification of the Spirit and Belief of the Truth, ver. 13.* And having renewed his Exhortations to abide steady in the Faith of the Gospel, in the 15th verse, and knowing how ineffectual all his Endeavours would prove, unless spiritual Supplies, and divine Influences, were granted them from the LORD, he therefore, in the Words of our Text, most affectionately, and with great Solemnity,

com-

commits them by Prayer to his gracious Care and Keeping.

In discoursing on which Words I shall observe,

I. *First*, The great Objects of the Apostle's Prayer, *our Lord JESUS CHRIST, and even our Father.*

II. *Secondly*, Those Blessings of Grace which he here gratefully acknowledges his and their Interest in, as already received.

III. *Thirdly*, The Subject-matter of his present Request for them.

I. *First*, The great Objects of the Apostle's Prayer; and these are, 1st, *Our Lord JESUS CHRIST.*

When the Apostle mentions CHRIST, he delights to mention him in his Relation to his People: So here, he useth a Pronoun Possessive, *OUR Lord JESUS CHRIST*, for it is Relation and special Interest,

terest, that commendeth and sweetneth CHRIST to us; and as the great and blessed GOD alone is the proper Object of divine Worship, our Text may furnish us with various Arguments to establish the Doctrine of our Lord JESUS CHRIST, his proper Deity, and Equality with the Father. *Athanasius* made this Use of it in his Contest with the *Arians* of his Day; for the Apostle pays the same divine Worship to the Son as to the Father; and those Blessings which GOD alone can bestow, are ascribed to the Son as his own proper Gift; and those divine Favours which it is the peculiar Prerogative of GOD to give, are requested from Him, as well as from the Father: Yea, he is mentioned in this Place before the Father, as the Father is often mentioned before the Son; not to intimate any Superiority, but a perfect Oneness and Equality. So that here we have a Warrant, and a kind of Direction, to yield the same divine

B

Honours

Honours to our Lord JESUS CHRIST, as to
God the Father.

The second Person addressed in the Text,
is God, *even our Father*. Who is a Cove-
nant-God and Father to all his People;
To the Apostle, and to those Saints at
Thessalonica. Yea, He is the GOD and
Father of our Lord JESUS CHRIST; and
perhaps one Reason why he mentions
CHRIST first, is to remind them, that it is
in and through him, they became the
Children of GOD; He *having predestinated*
us unto the Adoption of Children by JESUS
CHRIST to himself, according to the good
Pleasure of his Will; Ephes. i. 5. *and chosen*
us in him, before the Foundation of the World:
Ephes. i. 4. and because *by Faith in CHRIST*
JESUS we are all the Children of GOD, Gal.
iii. 26. Not that Faith makes us Children,
or puts any into this Relation; no, this
is an Act of his own rich Grace; but
hereby we who have believed through
Grace, appear to be so, and sensibly ex-
perience that we are so. For, *Because*
ye

ye are Sons, GOD hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your Hearts, crying, Abba, Father : Gal. iv. 6. Nor is the divine Spirit excluded in those Addresses ; for his Love and Kindness is implied in all this Comfort and Consolation, which they already had happily experienced.

But this leads me, secondly, to consider those Blessings which the Apostle here gratefully acknowledges his and their Interest in, as already received ; and he divides them into three Branches.

1st, Interest in the divine Love.

2^{dly}, A Participation of everlasting Consolation.

3^{dly}, A good Hope through Grace.

1st, The Apostle here gratefully acknowledges his and their Interest, in the divine Love ; *who hath loved us*, in the plural. " Me, as though he should say, *who was once a Blasphemer and a Persecutor, and In-*

jurious; 1 Tim. i. 13. and of Sinners am Chief, ver. 15. therefore, in myself altogether unworthy of his Love. And You also, many of whom, as a Fruit of his Love, he hath turned from Idols to serve the living and true God, 1 Theff. i. 9. to whom our Gospel came not in Word only, but also in Power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much Assurance, 1 Theff. i. 5." From whence he argues their Election of God, *ver. 4.* and with them he includes all the Election of Grace; *Who HATH loved us, in the past Tense; that is, hath loved us of old, from everlasting; for so God declareth respecting his Love to his Church: I have loved thee with an everlasting Love, therefore with Loving-kindness have I drawn thee, Jer. xxxi. 3. Who hath loved us; that is, our Lord JESUS CHRIST, hath loved us; and God, even our Father, with a peculiar, special Love. And as the Apostle delighted much in appropriating the Love of God and CHRIST to himself, this teaches us so to do also: this Love of God lies at the*
 Bottom,

Bottom, and is the Source and Cause of all the Blessings we receive in Time, or hope for in Eternity. And therefore he mentions this first, as also to encourage them to expect what he here requests for them.

But, secondly, he acknowledges his and their Participation of everlasting Consolation. Common Gifts, and all earthly Comforts come from God, and are to be ascribed to Him; but these are not here intended, for these are not everlasting; they begin in Time, and are short-lived; at farthest continue only till Death: Therefore spiritual and divine Consolations are here intended, such as flow from special Love, and are produced by a Sense of Interest therein. The Word signifies something more than Peace of Mind, or ordinary and common Comfort, which God is stiled the God of, 2 Cor. i. 3. even that Joy and Gladness with which they received the Word, 1 Thess. i. 6. This
God

God had given them, for the World cannot, Men cannot, nor can we give it ourselves: And he calls it *everlasting Consolation*; God gives it to whom he loveth, for his Love is communicative to all them, and none but them he loveth.

Now though some whom God loveth may not always feel and enjoy this Consolation, yet they have a Right to it, and God hath it in reserve for them; and though the poor Believer's Comfort and Joy is often interrupted, and broke in upon by Sin, and Satan, yet it may be termed *everlasting*, because, first, it was provided in Eternity; God's *Covenant is well ordered in ALL THINGS, and sure*: And this Consolation is provided amongst the *all Things*, and was given them in CHRIST before the World began, 2 Tim. i. 9. secondly, This is called *everlasting*, because founded on everlasting Things: as, first, on the everlasting Love of an unchanging God, which is ever the same
to-

towards the Persons of his People, through all the various Changes which they pass by means of Afflictions, Temptations, Darknes and Distress; secondly, on the everlasting Righteousness of CHRIST, through which they are everlastingly justified, and completely saved from Condemnation, and in which they stand complete for ever. Thirdly, On the everlasting Promises of GOD, who hath said, *I will never leave thee nor forsake thee;* Heb. xiii. 5. And though *the Mountains shall depart, and the Hills be moved, yet my Kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the Covenant of my Peace be removed, saith the LORD, that hath Mercy on thee,* Isa. liv. 10.

But lastly, This may be called *everlasting* Consolation, because it shall endure for ever, it cannot be destroyed in its Foundation, nor can Men or Devils hinder its return, where GOD will cause it to flow
into

into the Hearts of his People. And it will eventually issue in everlasting Life and Joy in the next World, where there is a Fulness of it and Pleasures for evermore :
Psal. xvi. 11.

Thirdly, He acknowledgeth God had bestowed on him and them a good Hope through Grace. Hope is one of the Graces of the divine Spirit, which abideth with a Believer as long as in this World, and which the Saints are often called to exercise. And in its own Nature, Hope is a Desire after and Expectation of some real or supposed Good, not yet enjoyed, yet attainable; and this is called a *good Hope*, in Opposition to the Hope of the Hypocrite, which is a false one, and which shall perish. And it is a *good Hope*, because, first, The Author of it is so; God is its Author: Since He is stiled the *God of Hope*; it is his own Gift, and therefore said to be through Grace, as all the other Blessings are.

Secondly,

Secondly, The Objects hereof, and the Blessings hoped for, are all good : Our Lord JESUS CHRIST is our Hope, 1 *Tim.* i. 1. that is, his Righteousness and Death lays a Foundation for our Hope of Pardon and Acceptance with an holy God ; and this only is a proper Foundation for Hope ; and therefore He is emphatically stiled *the Hope of Israel*, Jer. xiv. 8. and He is in every Believer *the Hope of Glory*, Coloss. i. 27. And the Blessings provided and promised by God, for Soul or Body, for Time or for Eternity, are all good, good in themselves, and good for them, and the Believer's Hope respects them all.

But lastly, This Hope is a *good* one in its Fruits and Effects ; these are various and very precious ; all which prove its divine Original : It giveth Boldness towards God, and causeth the Saints at Times to *rejoice in Hope of the Glory of God* ; and it *maketh not ashamed, because the Love of God is shed abroad in our Hearts by the HOLY*

C

GHOST

GHOST *given unto us*; Rom. v. 2—5. It enables us to endure Hardness, as good Soldiers of JESUS CHRIST, to do or suffer the whole Will of GOD patiently; in a word, it tends to weaken and destroy Sin, and invigorate every Grace; for, *He that hath this Hope in him, purifieth himself, even as GOD is pure*, 1 John iii. 3. It looks, and waits, and longs, in its fullest Extent, for a perfect Freedom from all Sin and Sorrow, and to see the LORD JESUS, and to be like him for ever, to enjoy GOD in all his Persons; to be completely holy, and completely happy. And O how does this engage their Heart to love the LORD, and delight themselves in frequent Contemplations on the Enjoyments and Employments of the next World? But I hasten,

III. Thirdly, To consider the Subject-matter of his Request for them; and this may be considered in two Branches: And, first, He requests for them an Application, Continuance and Increase of spiritual
Com-

Comfort and Consolation. Secondly, Confirmation and Establishment in the Faith and Duties of their Christian Profession.

And in farther discoursing on this Head, I would note four Things; 1st, That amidst all the Afflictions, Temptations and Trials of the present Life, the Saints are at Times supported and comforted by the LORD himself. 2^{dly}, What is supposed or implied in the Apostle's requesting this for them. 3^{dly}, What is intended here, by *every good Word and Work*; and, 4^{thly}, The Import of this Request, and what it is to be *stablished* in them.

1st, That amidst all the Afflictions, Temptations and Trials of this present Life, the Saints are at Times supported and comforted by the LORD himself. Many are the Afflictions, Sorrows and Dangers, they are exposed to from the World, the Flesh, and the Devil; by which means

they often stand in need of spiritual Refreshment and Comfort ; and as God has graciously promised this unto them, so he sends them a suitable Portion of it, when and where, to whom, and in what measure it pleaseth him ; sometimes by one means, and sometimes by another ; but whoever is the Instrument, or whatever the Means, God himself is the Author of it ; *I create the Fruit of the Lips, crying, Peace, Peace, Isa. lvii. 19.* Hence He is stiled *the God of all Comfort.* He sometimes comforts his People when under a Sense of Guilt, by Discoveries of pardoning and forgiving Grace. Therefore he gives that Charge to his Ministers : *Comfort ye, comfort ye my People, saith your GOD : Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem ; cry unto her that her Warfare is accomplished, that her Iniquity is pardoned, Isa. xl. 1, 2.* Sometimes, he cheers and comforts them by Discoveries of his special Love towards them, and his Delight in them, as considered in CHRIST JESUS ;
and

and by shewing them the Glory and Grace of his well-ordered Covenant, the Riches of his Love in the heights and depths, and lengths, and breadths thereof: By Views of CHRIST, his superlative Beauty and Excellency: Communion with God, and raised Expectations of being with Him for ever.

Nor are these merely fancied Comforts, or airy Dreams, but the solid, supporting confirming Evidences of Interest in CHRIST, and to which the Spirit bears Testimony, when he *witnesseth with our Spirits, that we are the Children of God*; Rom. viii. 15.

2dly, What is supposed or implied, in the Apostle's requesting this for them; and here I would premise, this does not suppose they were Strangers to, or were destitute of the comforting and supporting Influence of the divine Spirit; nor does it suppose they stood in need of nothing besides Comfort: But first it implies his Desire that God would apply the Comfort
and

and Consolation to them which he had graciously given, and provided for them in his Covenant; that he would bring it home to their Hearts with Power, and cause them to receive it; because Unbelief, as far as it prevails, rejects the same.

Secondly, It implies that the Saints often stand in need of spiritual Comforts and Supports; and that none but those which God himself imparts, in a way of special Kindness, are suited to their Wants, or can satisfy the Desires or Cravings of their renewed Hearts.

Thirdly, It implies, that the comforting Influences of divine Grace, are Means which God useth to establish true Believers in the Faith and Holiness of the Gospel. And indeed, it will always be found that *the Joy of the LORD is Strength to the Upright*; and that a true Experience thereof, are the most effectual Means to promote Holiness in the Hearts and Lives of God's People;

People; notwithstanding all the Cavils of carnal Men, and the Abuse of Gospel-Grace which is justly chargeable on some of the Professors of it.

Fourthly, His requiring this for them, supposes we are to seek it from God by Prayer also; it is his Prerogative to give it; our Duty to ask it; and though He sometimes keeps a praying Saint long knocking at Mercy's Door, yet as Prayer honour-eth God, he often honours Prayer; for, *he regardeth the Prayer of the Desitute, and will not despise their Prayer*, Psal. cii. 17.

3dly, What is here designed by *every good Word and Work*. First, By *every good Word*, is designed all the revealed or written Word of God, all the Doctrines, Promises and Commands of the Gospel; and these are called *good Doctrines*, Prov. iv. 2. and 1 Tim. iv. 6. and it is called *the Word of Truth*, 2 Cor. vi. 7. And as all Truth is an intellectual Good, whether natural

or

or moral, so evangelical Truths are by way of Eminence *good*, and the Word of God is *good*, first, as it brings good Tidings of a Saviour born, *Luke* ii. 10. and of Salvation by him, *Acts* xiii. 26. Secondly, This is a *good* Word, as it is the Word of GOD, who is true and faithful in himself, and whose Words are all Faithfulness and Truth: The Promises and Threatnings of it are all true, and shall have their full Accomplishment. He is *good*, and doth *good*, and his Word reveals him as such, in all his Persons, Father, Son and Spirit: it contains Messages of his Grace, Epistles of his Love, and it opens the Riches of his Goodness to his People.

Thirdly, It is a *good* Word, as it produces good Fruits and Effects, wherever it is received in the Love of it, it is the Rod of CHRIST'S Strength, whereby he ruleth in the midst of his Enemies, *Psal.* cx. 2. It quickneth the loitering Saint,
and

and revives the drooping Soul, and by it the LORD often restores the poor Backslider; it is *perfect, converting the Soul: it is sure, making wise the Simple; it is right, rejoicing the Heart, &c.* Psal. xix. 7, 8. 2dly, By every good Work, is intended all such Works of Obedience to God's revealed Will which stand opposed to the Works of the Flesh, and the Works of the Devil, and which flow, first, from a good or right Principle, love to GOD, and CHRIST: Secondly, Which are directed to proper and right Ends, that is, the Glory and Honour of GOD; thirdly, which are useful to others, and convey Good to those about us; such are called *good Works*, 1 Tim. vi. 18. And now he prayeth that they may be established in all and every Truth of the Gospel, and every Act of Duty and Obedience: Which leads me,

Fourthly, To consider what is the Import of this Request, and what it is to be

D

esta-

established herein : Now to be established
 in every good Word, is, first, to trust in,
 and rely upon the Grace and Promises of
 the Word, with Confidence, as the Word
 of GOD which liveth and abideth for ever.
 2dly, To submit to the Precepts and Direc-
 tions of it, as a sure, instructive and ap-
 pointed Guide, as a Rule of Conversation
 in the Hands of the Redeemer, as *a Light
 that shineth in a dark Place, to which we do
 well to take heed*, 2 Pet. i. 19. 3dly, To ad-
 here steadily to the Doctrines of it in
 Times of Persecution and Seduction,
 when the sacred Truths of the Gospel are
 despised and denied by avowed Enemies
 thereto, when any part thereof is opposed,
 or in danger of being given up by others,
 through Inadvertency and Want of spiri-
 tual Discerning ; it intimates, we are con-
 stantly in Danger, may be sifted and
 tried, in this respect, by *the cunning Crafti-
 ness of them that lie in wait to deceive* ; or by
 the Persecutor's Rage ; and that we should
buy the Truth, and sell it not at any Rate ;
 and

and be valiant for the Truth upon Earth ;
that we need to enter farther into the Na-
ture of the Word of God, and get faster
hold of it from Time to Time.

Again ; To be *stabliſhed in every good Work* ; is, firſt, to be more conſtantly diſ-
poſed for the Diſcharge of them ; to be
ready and willing whenever G O D calls
to any Service for himſelf ; and to
fill up that Place in which he has fixed us.
That we may be enabled by God thereto,
that he would work in us, not only to will, but
also to do, of his own good Pleaſure ; for the
Saints are often forced to complain, to
will is preſent with me, but how to perform
that which is good, I find not ; and, when I
would do Good, Evil is preſent with me :
Rom. vii. 18, 21.

Laſtly, That they be not only diſcharged,
but diſcharged in ſuch a way as may de-
nominate them *good Works*, flowing from
Love to and Zeal for God, directed to the

Glory of his Name, in opposition to all hypocritical or partial, and legal or self-righteous Obedience. But I hasten to an Improvement, which I would endeavour,

1st, In a way of Examination and Inquiry.

2^{dly}, Of Direction and Exhortation.

3^{dly}, Of Encouragement and Consolation.

1st, In a way of Examination and Inquiry. You have heard something of the Privileges of the Saints, that is, that God loves them with everlasting Love; and that as a Fruit hereof, he draws them; that they are Partakers of an Hope that is spiritual and divine; and that amidst all their Afflictions in this State, they receive Consolations from God which are not few nor small.

And

And now, Sirs, give me leave to make the Inquiry, have you any Experience of these Things? Has God manifested this special Love to thy Person, O Professor, by a Work of real Grace upon thy Heart? Has the Divine Spirit entered thy Soul with Power, and reproved or *convinced thee of Sin, of Righteousness, and of Judgment*, John xvi. 8. so, as to cause thee to inquire seriously after a SAVIOUR? Has he shewed thee how defiled, polluted and sinful thy Nature is; how lothesome in the Sight of a pure and holy God; and how hopeless and helpless in thyself? Has he shewed thee the Atheism and Unbelief of thy Heart; the evil Nature, and dreadful Consequences thereof? That Faith in the LORD JESUS is absolutely necessary to the Salvation of thy Soul; and that whoever *believes not shall be damned?* Mark xvi. 16. Hast thou indeed seen the Glory and Perfection of his spotless Righteousness, and been thereby engaged to long after an Interest therein, with an *O that I may be found*

found in him, not having mine own Righteousness, which is of the Law, but that which is through the Faith of CHRIST; the Righteousness which is of GOD by Faith? In a word, Hast thou been drawn to the LORD JESUS? Yea, or Nay. If thou hast thus accepted of, or by Faith closed in with JESUS CHRIST, thou mayest then claim an Interest in the special Love of GOD, with all the blessed Fruits and Effects of it. But on the other hand, Are there any here who are utter Strangers to a Work of Grace? Have no spiritual Sight and Sense of the deplorable and ruined State in which they are by their Sin of Nature and Practice? Who see no Beauty or Comeliness in the matchless JESUS? In vain do such hope for Mercy and Pardon at the Hands of GOD; living and dying in this State, their Hope shall be cut off, and prove like a Spider's Web, Job viii. 14. Of what Avail is it to thee, O senseless and stubborn Sinner, that the Love of GOD is everlasting, that it is rich, and altogether free, that he justifieth freely by his

Grace,

Grace, through the Redemption that is in CHRIST JESUS? Rom. iii. 24. The most Hell-deserving of all the human Race, unless thou art personally interested therein. For as the Love of God, the Merits of the Redeemer's Death, and the effectual working of the Holy Spirit, are not of general and universal Extent; so we have no Evidence of divine Love till, as the Fruit of it, we are drawn; for whom he did foreknow, he did predestinate to be conformed to the Image of his Son; moreover, whom he did predestinate, them he also called; and whom he called, them he also justified; and whom he justified, them he also glorified, Rom. viii. 29, 30.

2dly, In a way of Direction and Exhortation: first, Let Believers be excited hereby to be much in Prayer for the comforting and confirming Influence of the Holy Spirit of God; and you may expect these, for they are to be obtained:

Nor

Nor should our own Unworthiness and Backslidings prevent our Applications; but, as Temptations and Dangers surround us, these should quicken us hereunto. O beg of God, that your *Heart may be found in his Statutes*: that he would *open your Eyes to behold wondrous Things out of his Law*, Psal. cxix. 18. That he would root, and ground, and settle you, in all the Doctrines of the everlasting Gospel, and that you may not be shaken in your Faith concerning any one of them.

Many of you have *witnessed a good Confession before many Witnesses*, and have for a long Time testified your Love to the Truths of CHRIST, by your supporting this Lecture: Pray for divine Keepings, that you may not swerve therefrom; but that your Faith may abide steady in the good old Way, even as ye have been taught.

But,

But, secondly, let me exhort you not only to pray for Establishment and Comfort, but add thereto the diligent Use of all other proper Means: Search the Scriptures, be much in the Study of them, and compare spiritual Things with spiritual; from them learn the Methods of Grace, and the Way of the Divine Spirit in his Operations on the Hearts of Men, as a Regenerator, Sanctifier and Comforter.

Thirdly, Beware of *grieving the holy Spirit of God*, by which the Saints are, and by which I hope many of you *are sealed to the Day of Redemption*, Ephes. iv. 30. For I am persuaded, that a Carelessness about his Operations, and rejecting his Reproofs and Instructions, is one great Cause of that Carnality and Carelessness which he suffers many to fall into; and which is so visible in the Lives and

E

Con-

Conversations of many superficial, trifling Professors of this Age, and of that Instability and Wavering in their Principles, also, which is so much cause of Grief to others of the People of God, and which is the Cause of stumbling to young Converts, and hardening profane Sinners in their evil Ways.

Fourthly, If you would experience Comfort and Establishment in the Way of the LORD, avoid as much as possible the Company and Conversation of such as are *Men of corrupt Minds, and destitute of the Truth*; many of whom are, as the Apostle calls them, *perverse Disputers, &c.* 1 Tim. vi. 5. and their Words will *eat as doth a Canker*, chap. ii. 17. It is exceeding dangerous to give way to a trifling, and disputing Spirit, and to be gadding about after mere speculative Opinions. O, Sirs, prize much, and put a high Value on the sound and settled grave Ministers

ters of the Gospel, of whatever Name or Denomination; and wherever you enjoy their Labours, count it your special Mercy. An evangelical, experimental Ministry, is the general Means by which the LORD builds up his People in their most holy Faith; and He makes it the Matter of a Promise: *I will give you Pastors according to mine Heart, which shall feed you with Knowledge and Understanding*, Jerem. iii. 15.

Fifthly, Beware of the least Degree of Cowardice or Shame, respecting the Truths and Cause of God: On all proper Occasions vindicate the same against the Calumny and Reproach which is cast on them; and when Opportunity offers, endeavour to establish and confirm others in the Truth.

Sixthly, Remember there is a Connexion between good Words and good
 E 2 Works;

Works; for the Truth of Doctrine, wherever revived in the Love of it, will incline and dispose to a close Walking with God. And now, Sirs, I do most earnestly pray, *that the LORD may direct your Hearts into the Love of God; 2 Theff. iii. 4. and that he may stablish your Hearts unblameable in Holiness before God even our Father, 1 Theff. iii. 13. that (in the Language of our Text) Our Lord JESUS CHRIST, and God even our Father, may comfort your Hearts, and stablish you in every good Word and Work.*

Lastly, By way of Consolation: And is it so, are the Saints of God thus highly favoured, are they loved by God with an everlasting Love, and are they Partakers of this good Hope through Grace? are they indeed supported and comforted by the LORD, amidst all the Troubles of the Way through the Wilderness of this World? O how should this encourage the drooping
ing

ing Soul ; *If God be for us, who can be against us?* Rom. viii. 31. Be of good Chear, O thou poor afflicted Saint, thy God will lay no more upon thee than he will enable thee to bear ; his Grace shall be sufficient for thee, and that Portion shall be given thee (for Soul and for Body) which infinite Love hath chosen ; he will perfect that which concerns thee, and the Work of Faith with Power ; and when thy Warfare is accomplished, and thou art ripe for Glory, then thy Faith shall be turned into Vision, and thy Hope into full Fruition : Thou, who hast been longing and looking for the Mercy of our Lord JESUS CHRIST unto eternal Glory, and sometimes *rejoiced in Hope of the Glory of GOD, shalt receive an abundant Entrance into the Kingdom of our Lord and Saviour JESUS CHRIST.* Let thy Soul then be often employed in admiring Thoughts of this rich Grace, and discriminating Favour : It becomes thee
often

often to cry out, " Why me, LORD! Why me!" and to acknowledge, with the Apostle, *By the Grace of GOD I am what I am*, 1 Cor. xv. 10. For even amidst all the Sins and Sorrows of our present State, *now are we the Sons of GOD, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know, that when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is*, 1 John iii. 2.

7 And now, the GOD of Peace that brought again from the Dead our Lord JESUS, that great Shepherd of the Sheep, through the Blood of the everlasting Covenant, make you perfect to do his Will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in his Sight, through JESUS CHRIST, to whom be Glory for ever, Heb. xiii. 25.

F I N I S.



Lately Published,

By the same AUTHOR;

- I. THE Necessity of the Spirit's Help in Prayer. Price 6*d*.
- II. CHRIST made of God unto his People Wisdom, Righteousness, Sanctification, and Redemption. Price 6*d*.
- III. GOD the unerring Leader of his People to a City of Habitation. Price 6*d*.

By the same Author

I. The Necessity of the Spirit's Gifts in
Prayer. Price 6d.

II. Our Duty to God and to our People
When We are in the Ministry. Price 6d.
and Redemption. Price 6d.

III. God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit
to a City of Ministers. Price 6d.